

# UConn

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,  
HEALTH AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES

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EXTENSION

## POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

**Title: Program Coordinator**

**Location: Based at Tolland County Extension Center in Vernon**

**Commitment: 20 hours/week part time position; Oct 2017-Sept 2018**

**Posting Close Date: Sept 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

### **Organization Overview:**

The College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources (CAHNR) at University of Connecticut is committed to its status as a land grant institution, serving Connecticut and the global economy through research, education, and public engagement. CAHNR's vision is to provide for a global sustainable future through scientific discovery, innovation, and community engagement. Our accomplishments will result in safe, sustainable and secure plant and animal production systems, healthier individuals and communities, greater protection and conservation of our environment and natural resources, balanced growth of the economy, and resilient local and global communities.

[UConn Extension](#) fulfills the land grant university's mission of outreach and public engagement. Over 100 UConn Extension specialists work in the 169 local communities across Connecticut as educators, problem solvers, catalysts, collaborators and stewards. Our eight regional Extension Centers, the Sea Grant program at Avery Point, the 4-H Education Center at Auerfarm, the Home and Garden Education Center and the UConn Extension office in Storrs are strategically located throughout the state to meet local needs. UConn Extension enhances small businesses, the economic and physical well-being of families, and offers opportunities to improve the decision-making capacity of community leaders.

### **Program Overview:**

Since 2012, the University of Connecticut (UConn) Extension has partnered with the Connecticut Department of Education (CSDE) Child Nutrition Team and FoodCorps CT to explore new tools and strategies to boost farm to school programming in school districts. Together, we have launched the [Put Local on Your Tray Program](#), which features a full suite of communication materials and harvest of the month graphics, tools for taste tests in the cafeteria, and seasonal recipes. We have also begun to recruit farmers to our initiative. Last school year, 35 school districts signed up to participate in *Put Local on Your Tray*; participating districts committed to serving locally grown on "Local Tray Days." UConn Extension has also hired a Farm to School Procurement Specialist to assist school food authorities (SFAs) with bids and contracts. For the summer of 2017, we worked together to promote a new 'Put Some Squash in Your Summer' initiative for the Summer Meals Program.



For the 2017-18 school year, we plan to continue our support to districts that choose to participate in **Put Local On Your Tray**. In addition, we plan to recruit 4 school food service directors with excellent experience and commitment to serving fresh, local food to work with closely in a new pilot initiative. We aim to demonstrate to other districts that serving fresh, local food can happen in all kinds of settings, whether small, medium, or large districts. We will develop cycle menus that feature local food each month as well as customized menus that are in alignment with national and state promotional days (such as CT Grown for CT Kids Week, National Nutrition Month, National School Breakfast Week). By the end of the year, the menus and recipes will be available in an online toolkit to help food service directors plan menus in advance of the 2018-19 school year. It is our hope to use the next 12 months to build enough momentum to fuel a broad, statewide, official launch for CT Farm to School in September 2018.

**Project Partners:**

1. FoodCorps CT
2. CT State Department of Education
3. Pilot districts – tba (four districts have been invited and we will know more by the time of job interview)

**Additional project partners are:**

School Nutrition Association of CT, New England Food & Dairy Association. CT Dept. of Agriculture, CT Dept. of Energy & Environment, Farm to Institution New England, End Hunger CT!, UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity

\*Activities are supported with funds from USDA Food & Nutrition Services and CT State Dept. of Education.

**Position Overview:**

UConn Extension is looking for an experienced and committed individual to join our **Tray** team to play a lead role in coordinating our efforts for the coming year. A successful candidate will have a proven track record of:

- Team leadership
- Managing multiple project deliverables with firm deadlines
- Outstanding professional relationship and collaboration skills
- Familiarity with Farm to School programming
- Communications and outreach

This Program Coordinator will report to the Associate Extension educator in Sustainable Food Systems, Jiff Martin. The position will be filled asap, with a potential start date of Oct 16, 2017.

**Responsibilities:**

- Coordinate and lead the delivery of technical assistance to school districts participating in **Put Local On Your Tray** for 2017-2018 school year (40% of time) [\*NOTE\* Other **Tray** team member are the Farm to School Procurement Specialist (10-15 hours per week), an Outreach Specialist (5-10 hour per week), and the Farmer Specialist (10 hours per month)].



- Point of contact - Respond first to requests for information about Tray
  - Team leadership – organize check-ins for the Tray team.
  - Technical assistance - Track technical assistance needs and delivery to participating districts
  - Communications coordination – Ensure consistent and timely interaction with participating districts and coordinate distribution of communication materials
  - Program representation - Attend Connecticut-based major events and possibly with regional groups as well, such as:
    - CT Farm to School Collaborative - Meets every 2 months
    - CT School Breakfast summit – annual event (tba in 2018)
    - Regional Steering Committee for New England Farm to School
  - Training - Deliver program trainings to school food staff and Farm to School allies in order to reinforce program tools and resources
    - FoodCorps CT training, as requested by FoodCorps state office
    - SFA training, if requested by CT State Dept. of Education
    - School Nutrition Association of Connecticut
  - Ongoing strategic planning - Coordinate + participate in strategy meetings with Advisory Team (UConn Extension, Dept of Education, FoodCorps CT) once every two months.
  - Evaluation - Participate as a member of the evaluation team at UConn to measure outputs and outcomes
- Work one-on-one with up to 4 school food authorities recruited for the pilot project described above (30% of time)
    - Pilot Project - Work in close collaboration with 4 districts (small, medium, large) to reshape their menus in the 2017-2018 school year, with the aim of gathering recipe ideas, tools, and resources appropriate for each size and suitable to share broadly with districts for their 2018-2019 school year. The pilot districts will be selected from among the current 15 districts that host FoodCorps members, thereby leveraging partnerships and staff capacity to ensure we can gather best practices and lessons learned without overly burdening our partners in this phase of work.
    - Technical Assistance - Coordinate and track technical assistance delivery from Tray team members to the Pilot district partners
  - Manage program backbone communications and resources (30% time)
    - Website - Manage online resources posted on PutLocalOnYourTray.uconn.edu resources:
      - Graphic images
      - Menus
      - Recipes
      - Newsletter templates
      - Photos
      - Tutorial videos
      - Links
    - Social media - Update Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts once per week. Grow followings by 10% over the year.



- E-Newsletter - Publish monthly e-newsletter for program partners and school district participants; in addition to stories, use this to highlight links/networks with NFSN, FINE, USDA, FoodCorps, and others in the field. Our e-newsletter currently has a subscription of 140. Grow newsletter subscription by 10% over the year.
- Digital Analysis - Gather Google Analytics to track efficacy of electronic elements
- Inventory Management - Maintain supply of program materials, order new materials when needed. Work with a professional designer, if needed, to adjust materials or develop new communication tools if needed.

**Compensation:** We anticipate filling this position as soon as possible, with the possibility of continuing through summer 2018. The position must be renewed every January 1st and July 1<sup>st</sup>. The compensation will be (\$25/hour for up to 20 hours per week). Due to the nature of the position, the expectation of 20 hours per week is an annual average, but is likely to vary with the school calendar and need to plan ahead for new school calendar in Sept 2018. Travel costs will be reimbursed at the applicable federal rate.

While there are no paid benefits, your temporary appointment may afford you the opportunity to purchase optional State employee health insurance at group rates.

**Qualifications:**

*Required:*

- B.A. or B.S. in sustainable food systems, agriculture, natural resources, public health, education, or related field
- A minimum of 2-3 years of experience in program coordination in education, agriculture, or related work in a not-for-profit setting
- Excellent organizational skills
- Sincere, honest, consistent communication skills
- Strong work ethic and reliable nature
- Oral speaking skills, including experience as a presenter
- Meeting facilitation skills
- Event coordination
- Experience working with diverse, remote teams toward a common goal
- Deep understanding the challenges that schools face, with a recognition of how this varies across a wide range of demographic backgrounds
- Familiarity with function and role of education service providers, including CT State Dept. of Education and USDA Food and Nutrition Services
- Good understanding of the federal meal guidelines of the National School Lunch Program and other child nutrition programs in school settings
- Comfortable working with individuals and organizations committed to meaningful social change and food justice through sustainable food and agriculture systems
- Excellent competency with computer and communications technologies including Microsoft Office Suite, Google Drive, and major social media platforms
- Must own a vehicle and be willing to travel across state for events or meetings. (Travel costs will be reimbursed at applicable federal rate)
- Must be available for 11-month period, although the time commitment and tasks will



vary. Between November to April there will be more programmatic driven activities in line with school year menus and meetings with partners in the pilot activity, and from May to August there will be more planning tasks to prepare CT State Dept. of Education for a launch of resources in time for the 2018-2019 school year.

- Flexibility and optimism a must

*Preferred:*

- Advanced degree in sustainable food systems, nutrition, agriculture, natural resources, public health, education, or related field
- Experience managing or serving in a leadership role with a network, coalition, alliance, or other similar collaborative efforts
- Experience working in school cafeterias or closely with school food services
- Service learning experience, such as AmeriCorps

**What's in it for you?**

- Work in an environment with colleagues that see broad connections between sustainable agriculture, food systems, and food justice
- Develop professional relationships with a new cohort of leaders in farming and food systems in Connecticut and across the nation
- Work alongside a supervisor willing to support your own professional development and networking opportunities
- Develop new contacts and introductions across University of Connecticut, state agencies, and at USDA

**To Apply:**

Our team is more innovative and responsive when our staff represents a diversity of perspectives and life experiences. People of color, people with disabilities, veterans, and LGBTQ candidates are strongly encouraged to apply. UConn provides reasonable accommodations to employees as required by law. Applicants with disabilities may request reasonable accommodation at any point in the employment process.

To apply for this position with UConn Extension, send a cover letter, resume, 3 references, and two writing samples (no more than 1 page each) to Jiff Martin, Associate Extension educator in Sustainable Food Systems. Send all documents together in ONE email to [jiff.martin@uconn.edu](mailto:jiff.martin@uconn.edu). In the subject line please use this description: "Last Name, First Name – Tray Program Coordinator position." Only competitive candidates will be invited to participate further in the recruitment process. Position closes Sept 18, 2017.

***University of Connecticut is an Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Employer and Program Provider.***

